

A

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Observations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Thursday, April 26. 1705.

IN my Examining the Matter of Manufaturing, and the Stops, Interruptions, and Discouragements of it, I came, in my last, to Examine the Rival of our Trade.

'Tis own'd, and the last Paper makes it plain, *Ireland* was a most Dangerous Rival in our Manufactures; and had it gone on, might in this time have brought them very low.

They had Wooll, in all respects as good, and in Price much Cheaper than we; they had all the Artists, the Methods, the Tools, and the very Manner of the *English*.

They Employ'd promiscuously the same People, and made the very same Individual Sorts; and a Man might have very good Skill in the *English* Manufacture, and seeing a Piece of Stuff, or Cloth Abroad, should not be able to know, whether it came from *England* or *Ireland*, but by the Seals, Town Marks, or some such Accidental Distinction.

These were Rivals indeed; for, added to this, they had all the Advantages of Cheapness of Labour, and especially to *Spain*, *Portugal*, and the *Sreights*, Cheapness of Carriage.

Here was nothing to hinder, but that the *English* Trade must have fallen at the Foot of the *Irish*, and our Manufacture might, in time, have been all Transposed to that Country, and with it our Wealth, our Wooll, and our People; for as the more Goods were made in *Ire-*

land, the less must have been made in *England*; the rising of the Manufacture in one place, must have been the falling of it in another; the Advantages they had of us in the Trade, enabling them to make their Goods equal in Goodness, and Cheaper in Price, the Trade must by natural undoubted Consequence, have soon been theirs.

But now let us Examine the Case Abroad, we have a great Discourse here of being Underfold, and of the *Dutch* and *French* being our Rivals Abroad: Pardon me, Gentlemen, if I am of the Opinion, there is little or nothing in it, and that I affirm,

There is no such thing as any Nation Rivaling the *English* in their Manufactures.

The Article of Underfelling, has been already Examined, and, I think 'tis plain, no Nation, take Value for Value, account Weight for Inches, as the *Horse-Courfers* call it; can Under-sell us.

Rivalling must consist of Imitations, Similitudes, Outvying, or Exceeding in Goodness, in Beauty, or in Price; in either of these, no Nation under Heaven, can pretend to come up to us, and indeed, do not pretend to it.

They will make Cloth, Druggets, and Stuffs indeed, but they must be meaner in Value, or Equal in Price; and where then is the Rival?

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And

And this must be plain, from the Price those Nations will give for our Wooll, which carries with it, these Unanswerable Arguments.

1. That their own Wooll, but as mix'd with ours, will not perform, will not make the Goods they want.

2. That with our Wooll, they must Enhance the Price.

'Tis plain, that *English* Wooll is often sold in *France* for 1 s. 6 d. per lib. to 2 s. in Bulk, and in smaller Quantities for more; and this must be supposed, the great Reason, why such Risques are run for the Exportation of it.

If then Foreigners cannot work their own Wooll without ours, if they can afford to give double the Price for ours, is it possible these should ever be our Rivals to any Considerable Damage?

In *Holland*, and in *Germany*, they make Cloths, but as their Wooll is Mean, Course, and Unfit for the Work, they make them accordingly; and to say many Countries use them for Cheapness, instead of ours, is to say nothing, that is not a Rivaling us at all, but an Evil in the Humour, a Poverty of the Buyer, which no Nation can Cure; as if the *English* Nation, by Poverty, or Humour, should resolve to Drink nothing but Beer, and make their Malt answer the End of the Foreigners Grape; all the Vine-Dressers in the World cannot answer; for that unless they would bring their Wines down to the Price of Small Beer; so indeed, if we will lower our Broad-Cloths below the Price of an *Irish* Blanket, something may be said, but this cannot be done.

Those are properly Impossibilities in Trade, which cannot be done to Advantage; People may be said not to be able to do in Trade, what they cannot do with Profit, and to get by.

In this sence, no Foreign Nation can Rival the *English* Manufactures; they cannot make them Equal in Goodness; we do now Under-sell all the World, Value for Value; and while this is true, we may receive some Damage, by meaner Scoundrel Goods crowding to the Market, and by the Humour of some Nations, that will Drink Small Beer, rather than Wine; but we cannot suffer any Capital Blow in Trade, while we keep up the Goodness of our Manufactures Abroad, in which none can come up to us.

If we sink the Value, we let all the World into our Trade; we bring our Wine down to Small Beer, which all Men will make as Cheap

as we; we raise Rivals upon us, and ruine our own Trade.

Thus, I think, I have made out, at least, to the best of my Capacity, that we are not Rival'd in Trade, by any Foreign Nation; that Low'ring our Wages, would ruine our Poor, reduce the Value of our Manufactures, and let in Innumerable Mischiefs upon us.

THE Observations of our Society being Adjourn'd a little, for the sake of more Material Business, some needful Remarks, will for some time to come supply its place; and the first, as promised in our last, refers to the *Scots*, as follows.

Gentlemen,

I Sent you a Letter last Week, to Desire your Opinion of the Affairs of Capt. Green, the pretended Pyrate in Scotland, and the Scandalous Contradictions which are published on that Account; it must be supposed, you cannot Answer to those things by your Silence, which will be farther Confirm'd by your Silence to this.

Yours, &c.

It is true, the Author of this has receiv'd several Letters, and some of them very warm upon the Case of *Green*, and his Crew; and they are Exceeding Earnest to Engage him in the Debate of this Case, Endeavouring to bring him into their own Error, (viz.) to Judge of a Matter before they hear it.

The Sincere Desire I have to persuade all Men to Peace, and the Honest Endeavour I have made towards it, will make my Answer to these Importunities differ from what I believe most People expect.

This Nation has no Crime to which they are more Naturally Inclind than hasty Censuring.

The Story of Cap. *Green*, as related in our Publick Prints, may seem to be very Doubtful, Uncertain, and full of Contradictions; the Circumstances of things, not yet admitting a full understanding in the Matter.

It cannot be agreeable to the Candor and Justice of Impartial Thinking, to Challenge the Justice of a Nation upon the Uncertain Reports, or Relations of Persons without Doors.

Affidavits taken in one Nation to Examine the Justice of another, Conclusions drawn from suggested Premises, Printing Scraps, and gather'd Pieces of Stories, either in our own, or in the *Scots* Papers, are not sufficient Grounds to Censure the Justice of a Nation.

'Tis more agreeable to Justice and Charity to believe, that the National Justice of *Scotland*, would not Condemn and Execute Men without sufficient Evidence of Fact.

'Tis true, a due respect ought to be had to the Dying Words of Men passing out of this World, and in prospect of Eternity.

But if Dying Speeches of Malefactors are Unquestion'd Proofs of their Innocence, then this Nation has no cause to reflect on the *Scots* for Condemning Innocent Men, the Butcher of *Gloucester* took the Sacrament, and afterwards Dyed, attesting his Innocence; the Person Hang'd for Marrying or Stealing, that worse than Strumpet, Mrs. *Pleasant Rowles*, against her Consent, Dyed avowing his Innocence, and her Voluntary Agreement; the *Romish* Priests, and Multitudes of others, are against them in this Article.

Nor may the Contradictions pretended in the Publick Accounts, be any Fault of the Publishers, who now only Print what is the general Report, and such Abstracts of Confessions, or Transactions, as they may come at, reserving to the last, the Correcting their own Mistakes, which, in all Cases, they ought to have reasonable time for.

The Contradictions on the other side (as we are inform'd) are not less, nor less Material; the Execrable Oaths us'd by *Madder*, at his Tryal, his Rude Behaviour, Inconsistent Discourse, and preposterous Intoxicating himself, so as to fall Asleep, when upon the Crisis of a Tryal for Life.

The several Inconsistencies and Clashings of their Accounts, the Temper and Manner of the Persons objecting here.

All these things move the Author to resolve for himself, and to Advise every Body else to suspend the Judgment of these things, till an Account may be had from Authentick Originals, and Printed by the Publick Authority of *Scotland*; and till then, it is reasonable to conclude, That Publick Justice has proceeded by Methods, which will justify themselves for no National Pique, ought to guide our Censures in this Case.

If Innocent Blood has been shed, the Lord have Mercy upon the *Scots*; for without doubt, it has been fill'd with a Complication of Ill Circumstances: If the Matter of Fact is Justifiable, our Censures stand in need of the same Charity; and when this is known, the Author will give his Judgment freely.

In the mean time, 'tis Matter of serious Reflection, to look back upon the Immoderate Heat of both Nations Resentment. 'Tis certainly a wrong Step on both sides, to run things up to such Extremities; the Publick Peace is the best Barrier of both Nations Prosperity; and they that prompt Misunderstandings between them, are certainly Enemies to both.

Nothing can be more horrid, than that the *Scots* should Execute these Men on a meer Pique at the *English* Nation.

Nothing can be more like it, than to conclude rashly, that it is so, and improve it on purpose to Exasperate our People against the *Scots*.

All Courts of Judicature proceed, or ought to do so according to Evidence; and 'tis so necessary to keep close to regular Attestation, that the most Cautious Courts of Justice in the World, have come under the Necessity of sometimes putting Innocent Men to Death; Perjuries, Forgeries, Subornations and False Witnessess, have often forc'd the Justest Magistrates upon Punishing the Innocent; and we have but too many Instances of this in *England*.

It is possible these Men may be Clear, Capt. *Drummond* may not be Murder'd, and yet the National Justice of *Scotland* not to blame, if they proceeded by such Methods as the Laws of God, of Nature, and of *Scotland*, directed them.

If they Condemn'd them upon Trifling Evidence.

If upon the Testimony of Scandalous Witnesses.

If upon Inconsistent and Contradicting Informations.

If which is worse than Malice can suggest, by National Conspiracy, may the Justice of God, Detest the Injustice of Men, and Glorifie his Vengeance in the Punishment.

But if there was plain proof of Fact, if Concurring Circumstances, if Corroborating Confessions of Persons present:

Tho' all this Proof was really Forg'd.

Tho' the Circumstances were Feign'd.

Tho' the Confessions were Fram'd and False.

Tho' the Men were all Innocent, yet is the National Justice of *Scotland* not to blame.

And after all, it does not appear, why this Nation should take this Matter so hainously of the *Scots*; or to what End some People are so willing to make it a National Quarrel; they that Design a Breach between the Kingdoms, be they *Scots* or *English*, deserve the Hatred of both.

both. No Breach can happen here, but to the Infinite Damage of both.

The *Scots* hardly know what they do, if they Covet it; and we hardly know what we say, when we Talk of it.

As to the Matter in Hand, they have proceeded by Forms of Law, they have Hang'd some of their own Nation, as well as ours, and neither are the first that have been Murther'd in Forms of Law, in both Nations.

If it is a Mistake, 'tis a Terrible one, and let the *Scots* Answer for it, no doubt but Divine Justice will Demand an Account of it; but it cannot be reasonable to make a National Quarrel of it, or to ground any Prejudices upon it, as the Foundation of Breaches, which some have waited for an occasion to make.

THE Subject of Peace will be Explain'd, and further pursu'd in our next Review.

THE Gentleman whose Letter is Sign'd G. C. is desired to call at Mr. Matthews for a Verbal Answer to his Letter.

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